

over the weekend I learned that one of these men—I was talking to a relative of his—would be getting an increase of between \$90 and \$100 as a result of this legislation. Now, he was not at all ungrateful, but it seemed to me that the sum was so little for a 100 per cent disability pensioner. I would point out that when this man joined the regiment he was not unskilled; in fact, he was a very skilled young man. But what was left for him when he came back? He has to live on a pension the rest of his life. As I mentioned earlier, both these young men were just newly married when they joined the regiment, so you can understand what happened to their marriages.

Normally when we speak of pensioners, I think we are speaking of unskilled workers. This fact in itself has created some difficulties in so far as the Pension Act is concerned. But for years and years we have kept it as applying to a basic unskilled category.

I would also point out, honourable senators, that the thought of providing an automatic increase did not appeal to the government, and the reason that was given was that it might be a precedent. But what better precedent could be set? I had not given this matter too much thought recently, except in a general way, until the matter came up in the House of Commons, and I was asked by some veterans when we would be likely to deal with the bill. I said that it probably would be before the end of the session. For once in my life I was right. But I think we are dealing with the bill on wrong principles, and on a wrong basis. We should keep in mind that we are dealing with pension legislation for people who are in some cases almost helpless, for people who are from 75 per cent to 90 per cent disabled. I know that so far as these people are concerned, it might be considered a case of out of sight, out of mind. We are not in the habit of thinking of people in these circumstances until a bill like this comes before us for consideration, but I think they are people in whom we ought to take a greater interest. I know that veterans' organizations do take such an interest, and they are doing a tremendously important job. But we who are parliamentarians and veterans, who know the situation at first hand, ought to make sure that we do more in the Senate in respect of such matters as veterans' pensions, and indeed other pensions as well.

I am aware that some pensions which were granted years and years ago have totally outlived their usefulness, but veterans' pensions are a public responsibility, and when the government speaks about not wanting to set a precedent, I would reply that it is never a bad precedent to set when you do something of value for veterans.

**Hon. Mr. Asselin:** What do you suggest?

**Hon. Mr. Choquette:** It is a nice speech. You might get good publicity. But what do you say by way of something constructive? As I say, I like the type of speech you make. It is always good for publicity. Now what do you suggest that would be constructive?

**Hon. Mr. Croll:** I did not stand up here and speak just for publicity. I did so because I was bothered.

**Hon. Mr. Choquette:** But you stood up to speak.

**Hon. Mr. Croll:** I was bothered because this measure relates to veterans, and I stood up to speak on that basis.

**Hon. Mr. Choquette:** And what did you accomplish?

**Hon. Mr. Croll:** I accomplished this, I think; I got you to the point where you are thinking and talking about it.

**Hon. Mr. Choquette:** Not thinking about it; thinking about you.

**Hon. Mr. Croll:** Don't waste any time thinking about me. I will look after myself.

**Hon. Mr. Choquette:** You usually do. You didn't call the TV?

**Hon. Mr. Croll:** What I was suggesting was that the Senate should take an interest in matters concerning veterans. If this has registered, then it will be a good thing for the veterans.

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** Honourable senators, I am not one of those speakers who prepare a written speech, and then read it verbatim. Probably my speeches would be much better if I were to do so. But I did make a note in the submargin of my headings to comment on Senator Carter's remark, as did Senator Croll just now, and that was simply to state that there was no precedent cited on enlistment, there was no precedent cited when going into combat; why should it be considered as a precedent now?

I thank you very much, Senator Croll, for bringing my omission to the attention of the Senate.

● (2050)

**Hon. Mr. Carter:** Honourable senators, Senator Croll referred to \$100 per month and I am not too clear as to that. The bill increases the basic rate by \$100 per month.

**Hon. Mr. Croll:** That is what I said—an increase of approximately \$100 on the basic pension.

**Hon. Mr. Carter:** That is on the basic pension.

**Hon. Mr. Croll:** Yes, that is exactly what I said.

**Hon. Mr. Asselin:** Senator Croll said it is not enough.

**Hon. Mr. Carter:** But it also increases the widows', wives' and children's allowances in the same proportion. The total increase per month is, therefore, much more than \$100.

**Hon. Mr. Croll:** Honourable senators, I spoke of two young men who had just married before going overseas, and when they returned they were 100 per cent pensioners. The family increase did not affect them at all. I was referring to the increase of \$100 for these two young men.

**Hon. Mr. Carter:** I have a clearer idea now but, of course, Senator Croll must remember that in the early days there were no allowances for children. The basic rate applied for the pensioner, plus an additional amount for the wife if the pensioner were married. That situation continued for many years, until eventually allowances were granted for children in addition to the wife and the veteran himself. In my opinion, we would all be happier if we could do more for our veterans than we are able, but we must agree that an increase of \$100 per month over the basic rate established two years ago is a substantial increase.

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** Pardon me for interrupting, Senator Carter. You are putting very misleading figures on the record when you say it is an increase of \$100 per month over the rate of two years ago. Perhaps you are using Joey